










Setting Up Your Home Office and Virtual Office Checklist

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Setting up your home and virtual office doesn't have to be a daunting task. Your primary concerns should be **comfort**, **professionalism**, and **efficiency**. If you want to maximize your *productivity* and *minimize potential problems* make a checklist or feel free to use this one as a guide:

Home Office Setup Checklist:

-  **Choose a favorite room** - Select a favorite room in your home, it should be one that you really enjoy spending your time in. Why? Because this room will be the place where you conduct business and your surroundings have a great impact on how you think, feel and make decisions. If it's neat and organized you'll be surprised at just how much you can accomplish.
-  **Colors** – keep your office color bright, it's better for lighting and brightens your day when it seems a little gloomy 
-  **Pictures** – keep it to a minimum and professional. Depending on the size of your home office a few pictures really can brighten and personalize. I have drawings from my daughter, a school photo of her and some of my favorite art photo/paintings. I also chose last year to dedicate a wall to my accomplishments, when days seem like they sometimes do, my accomplishments give me the extra drive I need to keep going.
-  **Window | Ventilation | Air** - with your hardware running constantly, it's important to have proper ventilation and air circulation going.
-  **Chair** – Choosing a comfortable chair can not be stressed enough, go to the store, take your time and sit in a selection of chairs. This particular piece of furniture is where you'll spend a lot of time so it must be comfortable. Do your research, a good ergonomic chair w/back support may cost a little but its well-worth the investment.
-  **Desk** – if you're able to fork out the bucks for a big desk, do it. When you're running a business, you deal with many clients, a big desk allows you to organize those client files and documents and multi-task more productively.
-  **Mouse Pad w/Wrist support**– I know this might sound crazy, but when you use a mouse most of the day it strains your wrist. Investing in a mouse pad with gelled support simply feels good to the wrist. Again you pay a little more for the mouse-pad but its well worth it.
-  **Computer Hardware** – I can't recommend a particular brand of hardware but I do recommend that you invest in the fastest PC your budget can afford. A few particulars to keep in mind when purchasing your computer system:

- ✍ Max out the RAM if you can afford it. Don't go any less than 256meg (computer programs like XP eat up memory)
- ✍ Look at investing in a 19" Monitor, no less than a 17"
- ✍ Max out your hard-drive space as much as your budget will allow: a sufficient minimal amount is 40gigs, a nice amount is 80gigs or higher.
- ✍ Invest in a CDWR – this is the read/writeable CD, you can store huge amounts of information on a CD. **Tip:** storing data files to a CD can help to keep your system running at optimal levels along with conducting monthly maintenance and serve as a reliable data backup source.
- ✍ If you really have the budget go for the CDWR/DVD/RW Combo
- ✍ Processor Speed – processor speed determines how fast your system processes information / applications. Recommendation, don't go any less than a 1.6gig; a nice to have 2.0gig or higher.
- ✍ Printer – go for the color/black/white inkjet, again if your budget permits investing in a laser printer is also suggested.
- ✍ Video Cam – not a must have now, but will be in the next few years. It's definitely a perk for your clients who like video conferencing.
- ✍ Zip Drive – I personally love it; it's mobile and fast. Not a need but a nice to have.



General Office Supplies – pens, pencils, notepads, sticky notes, mini tape recorder, stapler, ruler, staple remover, paper clips, file folders, pencil sharpener, scissors, this is just a start, get what you'll need to run your business efficiently.



Telephone and Service – invest in a telephone that's comfortable, you'll spend a great deal of time on it. Nice features to have include: 2/lines or more, speaker capability, hold, conference, redial, mute and headset (keeps your hands free). With regard to telephone service, do your research and go with the company that offers you the best deal and quality services you want. You can also look to the Internet, check out: www.ureach.com (it's features include voice mail, call transfer, toll free service, fax, email account and much more and they allow you one month Free). **Tip:** Use MS Outlook to track calls made to and received from clients or simply download a call tracking sheet to keep track of your business telephone calls.



Cell Phone – this is quickly becoming the business phone of choice particularly for small business owners. Most cell phone services come with all the features your business needs (2 way calling / 3 way conferencing / voice mail, 2 way-text messaging and much more) **Tip:** used exclusively for business makes tracking client calls easier.



Fax Machine – What is that? Invest in efax.com and get a free fax number (this is particularly attractive to virtual business owners as your faxes travel with you)

PROFESSIONALISM -

Here are some of the primary items you need to conduct business professionally:






Letterhead

Business cards

Filing cabinets
Billing system

Accounts payable/receivable records
Patience, persistence and practical sense.

Virtual Office Checklist:

-  Laptop w/carrying case
-  Cell Phone
-  Portable File Folder
-  Dial-up Internet Service Provider (e.g., AOL, CompuServe, Earthlink, MSN)
-  EFax Number (good for voice-mail and receiving faxes; excellent when traveling to a new duty station because all messages are forwarded to you via email)

That's it for now, if you have a question or comment visit the VBO message board and post it there and as always happy virtual officing!

Regards,

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